

INDIA AND IRAN IN THE *LONGUE DURÉE*

Ancient Iran Series | Vol. III



India and Iran in the *Longue Durée*
Edited by Alka Patel and Touraj Daryaee

© Edited by Alka Patel and Touraj Daryaee 2017

Alka Patel & Touraj Daryaee are hereby identified as authors of this work in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988

Cover and Layout: Kourosh Beigpour | ISBN: 978-0-9988632-0-7

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including his condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

INDIA AND IRAN IN THE *LONGUE DURÉE*

Edited by
Alka Patel and Touraj Daryaee

UCI Jordan Center for
Persian Studies



— 2017 —

In memoriam

Sri Pramod Chandra Chaudhury, 1930-2016

Hushang A'lam, 1928-2007

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	I
Note on Transliteration	III
Alka Patel & Touraj Daryaee India and Iran in the <i>Longue Durée</i>	1
Osmund Bopearachchi Achaemenids and Mauryans: Emergence of Coins and Plastic Arts in India	15
Grant Parker Nested Histories: Alexander in Iran and India	49
Touraj Daryaee & Soodabeh Malekzadeh The White Elephant: Notions of Kingship and Zoroastrian Demonology	61
Frantz Grenet In Search of Missing Links: Iranian Royal Protocol from the Achaemenids to the Mughals	75
Ali Anooshahr The Shaykh and the Shah: On the <i>Five Jewels</i> of Muhammad Ghaws Gwaliori	91
Sudipta Sen Historian as Witness: Ghulam Husain Tabatabai and the Dawning of British Rule in India	103
Afshin Marashi Parsi Textual Philanthropy: Print Commerce and the Revival of Zoroastrianism in Early 20th-Century Iran	125
Alka Patel Text as Nationalist Object: Modern Persian-Language Historiography on the Ghurids (c. 1150-1215)	143
Contributors	167

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors and authors thank the anonymous reviewer of this volume's manuscript for her/his careful review of the work and suggestions for its improvement. Also, Dr Kamyar Abdi's meticulous editing of the manuscript was essential to rendering the book of greater value to scholars from multiple disciplines, which is one of the principal aims of the publication. For subvention of publication we are grateful to UC-Irvine's Humanities Commons. The volume would not have come to be, however, without the initial gathering of scholars at an international conference at UC-Irvine (2012), thus we happily acknowledge the support of the following entities in that initial endeavor:

At UC-Irvine: Center for Asian Studies
Office of Research
Maseeh Chair in Persian Studies & Culture
Humanities Center
Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies

Additionally: American Institute of Iranian Studies
Farhang Foundation
Center for India and South Asia, UCLA

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Historical names, terms, and titles of works have been transliterated. To avoid undue complexity, modern names of persons and places remain untransliterated.

THE SHAYKH AND THE SHAH: ON THE *FIVE JEWELS* OF MUHAMMAD GHAWS GWALIORI

Ali Anooshahr

In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, a Sufi Shaykh by the name of ‘Abd Allah Shattari (d. 1485) journeyed from Iran through Central Asia to India, and began preaching the doctrine of Shattari Sufism. Shaykh ‘Abd Allah engaged in behavior that was quite unusual for Indian Sufis. He travelled widely, dressed in royal robes, and had his followers don armor (Nizami, 1950, 57). While his actions may have surprised Indian Sufis, they would not have been so unusual in the Iranian plateau whence he arrived. This is because a contemporary of Shaykh ‘Abd Allah, the head of the Safavid order Shaykh Haydar of Ardabil, had also engaged in very similar behavior at about the same time in the 1470’s and ‘80’s. He and his followers had exchanged their Sufi robes for armor in their quest for power in Anatolia and the Caucasus (Khunji, 2003, 267-268).

Indeed, unlike many contemporary South Asian Sufis, the Shattari order in India shared a fundamental similarity with the Safavids of Iran, namely the direct pursuit of secular rule. As Simon Digby and others have argued, late Sultanate Sufi orders tended to compete, not collaborate, with kings over influence and authority in north Indian societies. Moreover, the sphere of activity for the sultans and shaykhs were independent from one another—one operating from the royal court and the other from the Sufi lodge (Digby 1990, Aquil 2008). The Shattaris, however, gained access to an imperial *darbar* when the leaders of the order in the early sixteenth century, namely, Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws Gwaliori and his brother Shaykh Phul, joined the newly founded Mughal state. To date, scholars have spent less time on the political side of the brothers’ teaching than its mystical aspects. For instance, we now possess a considerable body of literature that has analyzed the influence of “Hindu” religion on the Shattaris, generally concluding that, while the Gwaliori brothers certainly had knowledge of Indic religious practices, their teaching was firmly rooted in Islamic occult sciences (Gaborieau, Ernst 1996, Ernst 2003). The present article will rather focus on three aspects of Shattari doctrine that distinguished it from other contemporary orders: their emphasis on ritual, their bold promise of visionary and miraculous powers (Ernst, 2008) to their followers, and their unapologetic connection to the political sphere.

But first, a brief note on the historical background: Muhammad Ghaws Gwaliori was nine years old when he found his spiritual mentor (Haq 1982, Kugle 2003, Ernst 1999). He had “felt the fire of love” from early on in life and a dream brought him to the *pir* [elder/master], Shaykh Tahur Chachi in Chunar. When the old man met him, he told the boy that God had promised him a son and now he has been delivered to him (Ghaws, *Javahir*, 3a). He instructed his young disciple for sometime, and afterwards sent him out to the mountains outside the fortress of Chunar. Shaykh Muhammad spent thirteen years and four months in solitude, practicing austerities and writing down his experiences. When he returned, he showed his elder what he had written, and the *pīr* approved, telling him he was ready to go instruct the people (Ghaws, *Javahir*, 3b). The year was 1521/2. A lot happened in the ensuing three decades. The Mughals conquered north India, and Shaykh Muhammad and his brother Shaykh Phul entered politics. Shaykh Muhammad used his prestige in order to help Babur (r. 1526-30) take the fort of Gwalior. Shaykh Phul rose to become Humayun’s (r. 1530-44, 1555-6) spiritual advisor.

Sufi orders were of course some of most powerful social organizations in India during the period, and it was reasonable for the new Mughal state to establish good relationships with them. This occurred mainly during the reign of Emperor Humayun for the following reasons: for one, the new regime had been rejected by the greatest living Chishti Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (d. 1537) who had referred to the Mughals as enemies of Islam and who was much more closely connected to many of the Afghan rebels fighting Humayun (Digby 1974, 71). The Suhrawardi order, counting among its adherents the poet and mystic Shaykh Jamali, did indeed join the Mughal court but did not appear to wield much political power as they had little influence outside the court. The Central Asian Naqshbandis who had come to India with Babur were too troublesome, and moreover attached themselves to the Mughal military elites who were proving difficult to control for Humayun. The Shattaris, on the other hand, were very much connected to the vernacular culture of North India, and were also free of the problematic political associations that marred the other groups.

This explanation runs against the comments of early scholars such as K.A. Nizami, who argued that the Shattaris had a “magnificent superstructure” but their foundations were laid in “quicksand” (Nizami 59). Nizami contended that common people in Hindustan could not understand Shaykh Muhammad’s doctrine (Nizami 60). More recent scholarship has challenged this view, however. For instance the late Aditya Behl demonstrated how the complex doctrines of the head of the order were simplified and filtered down by bilingual Sufis who composed mystical romances in north Indian vernaculars (Behl 2001, xi-xlvii).

Nevertheless, the connection to power did indeed prove costly and risky for the Shattaris. Shaykh Muhammad’s brother, Shaykh Phul was murdered in 1540 by a brother of the emperor and a group of his fellow rebels from among the Mughal army. When the Afghans regrouped under Sher Shah Sur and drove the Mughals out of India for about fifteen years, Shaykh Muhammad went into exile in Gujarat, where he was ill treated by other Sufis (Kugle 30-34). After Mughal rule was reestablished in 1555, Shaykh Muhammad was coolly received at the court of the new emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605). He died in obscurity shortly after the Mughal restoration (Qadri 1996, 63-77). The Shaykh

did nonetheless manage to complete the final version of his doctrinal text, the *Javahir-i Khamsa* or *Five Jewels* before his death. He wrote in the preface to the final draft that he wished people to compare all older manuscripts with the final version, which was to supersede the previous versions (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 4a).

What does the *Javahir* tell us about the practice of Shattari sufism? At the center of Shaykh Muhammad's teaching was the practice of invocation (*da'vat*) of the great names of God (*asmā-i 'uzzām*). These are discussed in the "third jewel," which covers over 100 manuscript folios, comprising over a third of the whole work. The Shaykh gave detailed prescriptions for the attainment of tremendous miraculous powers and visions. The prospective student had to learn the craft of invocation from the Perfect Guide (*murshid-i kāmīl*), who, the Shaykh explained, was one who had understood in every degree the divine names without being proud of the fact. Nor should he ever divulge them except to those who were trustworthy (*mahram*), and then only after being asked (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 70a). Those who were untrustworthy (*nā'mahram*) included women, children, slave boys, slave girls, and the like (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 111a).

Those with lower standards and accomplishments than the Perfect Guide may give permission for the seeker to invoke, but that would make the invocation less effective. Muhammad Ghaws wrote that he himself travelled in many regions in order to comprehend the names. Nowhere did he find someone who could reassure him until he found Shaykh Tahur Chahchi who pitied him, made him privy to the mysteries, and mentored him (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 70a). This is when our author spent his years in solitude practicing invocation until he witnessed indescribable visions. In the reciting of these names there exists danger of death (*khatar-i jān*) (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 70b). Many seekers, he warned ominously, ignorantly entered the practice and lost their lives due to panic and bewilderment (*tahayyur*) (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 80a).

How was the Shattari practice different than contemporary Sufi teachings? As stated above, Shaykh Muhammad's method stands out from other Sufi orders in three particular ways: its emphasis on ritual, its foregrounding of politics, and its vivid description of visions. I will begin with hierarchy and ritual. If one religious trend in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century India was represented by the Bhakti poets and their rejection of vertical social hierarchies and rituals, another as taught by Shaykh Muhammad emphasized the privilege of interiority vs. exteriority and required detailed formal procedure of its own. In other words, unlike other contemporary mystical movements the Shattaris re-emphasized rituals of which only the initiated could impart knowledge, and therefore instituted another kind of hierarchy. In order to determine the proper time and place of a particular invocation, for example, the seeker had to consult astrological tables, know the connection of each name with the four elements, calculate the sign of the zodiac, the four directions, and seven planets (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 70b-72a). Several days before beginning the invocation, the seeker had to purge himself by undergoing a period of strict abnegation. He should eat, speak, and sleep very little. He should state his intention, uphold uninterrupted fast, isolate himself from people, punish his ego, wear clean clothes, avoid animals, only receive food and drink from a trusted and appointed servant, and neither look at nor smell animal flesh. Under no condition should he come

into contact with meat, fish, egg, honey, or musk. He should also keep away from oil, milk, yogurt, vinegar, salt, date, and mango. He should certainly wear no make-up or sewn garments. Dealing with blood was also prohibited (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 73a). Failing to maintain this list of strictures could lead to death during the session (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 73b).

When the appointed day arrived, the seeker found a secluded place in which the voice of another could not reach him, such as a mountain or field where no one else was present (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 85b). Other acceptable places were deserts, riversides, orchards, or anywhere the seeker could hang upside down while praying (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 100a). Then the seeker would paint the ground beneath him with red, yellow, or green, place a prayer mat atop that, and begin to invoke the names (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 85a-86a). There were forty-one. Here is where the teaching of the *Javahir* differs from the kind of practice expressed in the Sultanate-period Sufi materials such as the hagiography of the contemporary 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi, but also the discourses of Nizam al-Din Awliya, or the treatises of Jamali Dihlavi. The Shattari leader promised and described a number of startling visions while simultaneously making bold moves towards political power.

The vivid intensity of the visions described by Shaykh Muhammad were unmatched by anything found in the writings of Jamali or the biography of 'Abd al-Quddus: The Shattari visions began about a third of the way through the *Javahir*. After all the necessary preparations, the seeker began invoking the Names until the spirits of the Biblical and Islamic prophets come and stand before him. They will be wrapped in a glow of light and will take him on a journey to the beyond. This otherworld is represented by ten *khaniqahs* or Sufi lodges (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 127b-128a). When, in the first *khaniqah*, the invoker encountered a one-eyed old man with an astrolabe before him, he (the invoker) should stand away and remain silent. The spirits of the prophets would talk to the old man, who would say that he was already informed by the occult that God had accepted the invoker. In the second *khaniqah* the invoker and his prophet-spirit companions would come upon a handsome old man sitting and perusing register books open before him. He too will aver that he has already read in the book of God's acceptance of the invoker (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 128a). In the third *khaniqah*, another handsome man would sit before instruments of music, stating that he too had already discovered in those musical instruments that God had accepted the young *dervish*. In the fourth *khaniqah* an all-loving being would be manifested and the invoker would turn into pure light, which signified his high rank. Here, a holy man [*shakhs-i rawhani*], endowed with all the good qualities, would be found sitting before many swords, encircled by countless birds singing beautifully around him. The prophet-spirits would talk to him and he too would admit that he knew, from before creation, that the invoker was accepted by God. In the fifth *khaniqah*, the prophet-spirits will talk to an imposing, totally red figure sitting with an unsheathed sword, who would say that he knew from several thousand years before that the invoker would arrive. At the sixth *khaniqah*, an old man full of light, evincing the signs of good fortune (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 128b) and resembling the 'ulama and the judges, would also state that he had read in the protected

tablet about the arrival of the traveler (invoker). At the seventh *khaniqah* another daunting figure, this time an old man who is all black, also claims he had knowledge of the invoker for several thousand years.

When the party arrives at the eighth *khaniqah*, it witnesses an impressive scene. Various groups in full or partial prostration are reciting the names of the prophets (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 129a), some in group prayers and others in individual prayers, with still others dancing with joy, but all of them totally rapt in their acts of devotion among lamps resembling icicles drooping all around. The prophet-spirits would greet the invoker, but he should remain silent. Suddenly the master of the prophets [i.e. the prophet Muhammad] will rise up and say aloud three times, “O dedicated, pure, and knowledgeable worshippers of God, listen, listen, listen!” The tumult will immediately stop and all will give ear. Prophet Muhammad will read a sermon and then ask the other prophets, ‘O intimates of God, what do you say about this reciter of praises?’ They would unanimously state that he is accepted. At the ninth *khaniqah*, an old, knowledgeable and wise man would be addressed by the prophet Muhammad as brother, and they would begin debating matters from sacred scriptures. It would appear as if each hair of the old man had turned into a human and they would all ask him about the invoker, to which the old man would also say that he had read about him in the protected tablet. Finally, they would all turn toward the world of the occult and ask God to accept the reciter of praises. Suddenly a loud voice would arise and say:

Master of the prophets and the best of men [i.e. Muhammad], know this that from the day this invoker began his prayers, we had him be accepted by God. Make this known: we have given all the actions and powers of the angels to Gabriel. Also, the acceptance and power that all the prophets possessed, we gave to Muhammad. Because of the invocation that this man has made for our love, we have given him the benefits of the rank of Gabriel and Muhammad. We have shown him the straight path. Should any son of man recite this name several times, the ranks of the prophets and friends [of God] will be registered in his book.

Immediately after this awesome scene a great voice will order, “return, return, return!” All the dwellers of the *khaniqah* will come forward and kiss the invoker’s hand (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 129b-130b), embrace him and disappear. The invoker, who by now begins to feel the effects of coming down, will weep uncontrollably due to the feeling of separation. No traveler, the *Javahir* concludes, will see such a sight for a thousand years, and if he speaks of it to any one, he will not be believed. Such intense and vivid description of ecstatic visions are lacking in contemporary Sufi writings, represented by Jamali Dihlavi or ‘Abd al-Quddus Gangohi.

But the *Javahir* diverges from such texts in another important way. This is because the political dimension of Shaykh Muhammad’s message is expressed far more unabashedly than that of his contemporaries. The textual remains of major Sufi figures from the Sultanate period usually express disdain for worldly power and are quite critical of kings.

Not the *Javahir*, in which broadly political goals presuppose an intimate relationship between the invoker and the monarch or other great men of state. This is of course natural given Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws's close association with the Mughal court during the reign of the Humayun. Some of the invocations were meant for a person who has access to a monarch and wishes to bend their will to his own. These were probably derived from the experience of the Shaykh at the court. He writes, for example:

When he appears before the Padshah [emperor], let him [the invoker] recite [the prayer] seventeen times while facing him and let him blow in his face [i.e. the Padshah's]. If he is not near, let him signal from a distance. When the Padshah's gaze falls upon [the invoker], if he has been invoking ahead of time, the Padshah will divulge to him the secret of his heart, and the Padshah will unintentionally feel a great love toward him even if he had been annoyed at him before (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 110a-110b).

These are interesting lines indeed from a man who intimately experienced the vicissitudes of court life in north India and Gujarat. Yet the author's self-assured ambition is also worth noting; the Shaykh had no doubt about the efficacy of his formulae. Other passages reflect the same kind of poise and desire for mastery:

If someone wants the sultans of the age to be obedient to and captured by him, he must forge a silver seal and inscribe this name on it. After fulfilling the required pre-conditions for twenty-nine days, let him begin the invocation. Then let him place that seal on his finger. When he goes to the sultan, let him look upon the seal many times. But he should not act in such a way as to attract the sultan's attention. This way, respect for the invocation will be maintained. Without a doubt, the sultan will become obedient, enthralled, and captured by him, and will seek out his company (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 111a).

The political ambitions of the Shaykh, as expressed in these formulae, were audacious. His ultimate goal was the subjugation of the ultimate master—the monarch himself. His metaphors make his objectives very clear. He wants to “capture” [*taskhīr*] the king and make him “obedient” [*mutī*]. For all his insistence on subtlety, Muhammad Ghaws Gwaliori's aspiration to power was sure to bring him into trouble with the masters he served and tried to manipulate. Other prayers in the *Javahir* are meant precisely to ward off such dangers. He writes, “If a Padshah, a tyrant [*zālim*], or a commander [*amīr*] is planning to kill somebody, let that person recite this name a thousand and forty-one times a day for forty days. God will bring kindness to the heart of the Padshah and those others” (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 152a). These are haunting words from a man whose brother was executed in 1540 by Mirza Hindal, Emperor Humayun's brother, on trumped up charges of treason.

By the time he revised his book for the last time, over a decade later, with these

memories deep in his heart, the Shaykh knew that his doctrine had to offer something to the monarchs as well. This he did along a range of possibilities, some of which were very general: “If a Padshah, vizier, or governor [*hākim*] has been thwarted in his affairs for some reason, let him bring forth the divine invoker, so that their affairs maybe righted again. This is because the good of the Padshah is the welfare of the world” (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 118b). Here, the promise is broad enough that it can entail a wide range of possibilities. What is significant, nevertheless, is the author’s willingness to prioritize and universalize the interest of the ruling elite. Few other Sufi writers of the period shared Shaykh Muhammad’s view.

At times, however, the help pledged to the monarch was very specific, particularly when it involved military matters:

If someone wants to disperse the foreign enemy, let him pick some dirt from the feet of the Padshah’s horse and bring it to the invoker. The invoker should invoke the name seven thousand times, and then puff on that dirt. Then let him stand up in the middle of his army, then see where the enemy sultan is standing, and where the center of their army is positioned. Then let him blow the dust against them and say “I have scattered you”, and let him clap his hands so that the sound may reach the ear of the enemy. Then let him resume the invocation. Suddenly the enemy host will scatter and victory will be achieved (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 138a).

As incredible as this hypothetical scene may appear, we know from independent documentation that it was indeed practiced. In the 1530s, while Humayun was in Gujarat, his brother Mirza Hindal; and the Emperor’s spiritual advisor Shaykh Phul (Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws’s brother) met an army of rebels led by Ulugh Mirza on the shore of the Ganges River in Qannauj and defeated them. The rebels fled to Awadh where they were joined by allies, and thus the two armies camped before each other in a stand-still that lasted two months. Mirza Hindal we are told, constantly chafed under inactivity and wanted to charge the enemy. However he would be prevented by Shaykh Phul who would say, “Be patient. I am busy invoking the names. God willing they will scatter by themselves” (Jawhar Aftabachi, *Tazkirat al-Vaqi’at*, 86). The opposition did not scatter but was eventually defeated. Nevertheless Shaykh Phul’s invocation was undoubtedly undertaken very much in the style prescribed by his brother some years later.

Alternative prayers for the same purpose recommend that the invoker should go to the front line, put his index fingers on his ears, recite the holy name seventy-one times and puff towards the enemy, saying, “I shut the hands, feet, and tongues of soldiers, horses, elephants, by the command of God almighty and by the honor of the great name”. The invoker could rest assured that they would all be defeated. Another approach would have the invoker imagine the enemy in the color red or yellow tilting towards black, all the while reciting the appropriate names (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 142b).

Of course, the doctrine as taught by the Shaykhs of Gwalior was not simply for kings. Rather, some of Shaykh Muhammad’s invocations were specifically addressed to

high ranking grandees. To them he vouchsafed both political as well as religious glory. He writes,

If a great man among the grandees [*akābir*] of the age wishes to attain a higher status than the one he has, and have all the other grandees and nobles [*buzurgān ashrafān va a'yan*] be eager for his company and obey him, and not challenge his orders or rebel against him or show arrogance [*takabbur*] towards him, but love and follow him, let him recite the aforementioned invocation seventeen thousand times a day for seventeen days. If it is glory he seeks, and status, pomp, and wealth, he shall attain it. He will obtain his worldly and spiritual needs. But if he is after the ranks and positions of the true universe and certain knowledge, he will reach true perfection and will lead the wayfarers of the [spiritual] path. And even if perhaps he should desire a kingdom and kingship, he will acquire it all once he completes the invocation (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 112a).

This mixed bag of guarantees contained very general promises. Politically, it is interesting to see that the Shaykh has left his options open. Presumably, a grandee who followed the Shaykh's instructions and attained kingship would have to overthrow a monarch already in place. Should this happen in the same geographical area, then royal patronage is assured the Shattari order regardless of dynastic change. Alternatively, Shaykh Muhammad could end up with the luxury of having two devotees in on the throne in different kingdoms.

Now, while the *Javahir* partially appealed to the social elite, the bulk of the promises made by Muhammad Ghaws targeted issues with which less powerful individuals had to wrestle. For instance, a number of the visions of monarchy he described were obviously from the perspective of those who, unlike the Shaykh himself, would have little direct access to a courtly setting and would have to recognize royal processions from particular signs. The following provides a good example of this: "At night a rider wearing royal clothes with a parasol over his head will appear with various soldiers around him. He will dismount from the saddle, remove the parasol from his head, and sit politely" (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 154a). This vision replicates the experience of many a royal visit to holy men in sixteenth-century north India, and Muhammad Ghaws too may have had a visit like this early on in life. Another vision probably draws and expands on a similar encounter:

On the fortieth day [of the invocation] a great tumult will arise, and whether in daytime or night, men of diverse faces on horseback arrive, each holding a lit torch. Suddenly in the midst of them will appear a sultan atop a lion and his face will be like the full moon and glorious and dignified. All around him will be servants with trays of gold and jewels for strewing, and he will be attended by a thousand fairies. They will greet the invoker. He should rise and place two hands on his chest and answer by signs and certainly not give speech to his tongue (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 132b-133a).

While it is safe to assume that Humayun, Sher Shah Sur (d. 1545), or Bahadur Shah of Gujarat (d. 1537) never rode on lions, other details (trays of jewels to be strewn, moonfaced beauties accompanying the king, a motley crowd of horsemen, lit torches, and the polite reaction of the Shaykh) are again very likely images of what a royal encounter would look like to notable men who nevertheless had little access to the actual court.

However, these occasional and spectacular visits notwithstanding, the *Javahir* assumed that a great many encounters with power would be unpleasant affairs. The book contains many instances of invocations that were meant to remedy the dangers to which ordinary individuals were exposed by those with political power. The following provides a grim example of this:

If they take a convict to the place of execution with the intent of killing him, and nothing can be devised to free him, let the invoker who recalls this name [?] devote his soul to it, purify his heart from all attachments to earthly and heavenly things, recite this name seven times, remove doubt and disbelief from his mind, follow the convict, and blow on him after every recitation. By the command of God Almighty the convict will be saved from death even if strong and powerful enemies be after him and even if the *qazis* and the ‘ulama [i.e. the jurists] had issued *fatvas* [legal decisions] (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 150a).

It should be clear that the political reality of many of Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws’ potential followers was rather dire.

As argued above, a great part of Shaykh Muhammad’s message included an emphasis on miracles and visions. However the realm of the military sometimes intruded here as well. A good example of this was the Shaykh’s vision of the planet Mars. In the *Javahir*, a number of passages detailed a direct encounter with the human forms of the seven planets, the sun, and the moon. For instance, during the recitation of a particular name, the moon would come down from the sky in the shape of a beautiful pre-pubescent boy [*amrad*], embrace the invoker, and ask him his desire. The invoker should say that he wants to see strange and wondrous things and not be tempted by all the gold and silver that the young boy would bring (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 142).

The visit from Mars, however, would be quite another matter. At some point during the invocation, a loud tumult would be heard and then a frightening man, tall like a dome, short-tempered and bloodthirsty, black-eyed with a naked sword in hand, would come and sit in front of the invoker. He would move his lips in uttering something, but the invoker would not understand him. If the invoker showed the slightest fear, Mars would cut off his head immediately. But if the invoker continued with the recitation he would capture Mars, who would promise to kill his enemies (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 152b-153a). In short the political aspects of Shaykh Muhammad’s teachings even penetrated the visionary parts.

Now, having provided examples of the peculiarities of the Shattari doctrine and its distinctness from some others, one should note three significant characteristics. First, as stated above, scholars of the medieval period have understood the Sufi saint and the king as representing competing sources of authority, wherein the relationship between the sultan and the Shaykh could even be adversarial. The life of ‘Abd al-Quddus Gangohi

demonstrates this pattern very well. But with Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws, the king and the Sufi saint joined hands in a mutual bid for power. It is certainly interesting how much the Emperor Humayun and the Shaykh had in common. Humayun, too, was remembered as overly cautious and respectful towards the names of God, being obsessed with astrology and omens. On the other hand, Shaykh Muhammad's astrology very much resembled the Mughal court's astrological practices at Gwalior, as represented by Khvandamir [1475-1535?]. At Humayun's court, each day of the week was color-coded based on its planetary sign, and the business of the day reflected the influence of the relevant planet (see the contribution by Grenet in this volume). While in late Sultanate India, usually Shaykhs of lower social standing engaged with royal patrons, Muhammad Ghaws was a rather prominent Shaykh, and his role as the personal advisor of the Mughal Emperor signaled a new phase whereby competition was being ended and the two bases of power were joining hands rather tightly.

A second significance involves the direction of influence. Regarding the relationship between Sufism and the Mughals, the common scholarly consensus is that Indian Sufis influenced Mughal policy. Scholars have posited that the kind of "syncretic" proselytization undertaken by north Indian Sufis helped bridge the gap between Hinduism and Islam, and this in turn setting the stage for the Mughal policy of *sulh-i kull*, i.e. tolerance shown to Hindus (Alam 2004). In the case of the Shattaris, however, influence between court and Shaykh flowed in both directions and apparently did not overtly involve Hindu practices.

The third significant quality of Shaykh Muhammad's teachings is what one might call his "human-centric religion". For all its fascination with astrology and visions, Shaykh Muhammad's doctrine is centered on the individual practitioner, in the sense that, while the power associated with medieval shaykhs like Nizam al-Din Awliya or 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi was fundamentally unachievable and mysterious, insofar as it was predestined by God, the power of Shattari doctrine was open to all. Anyone might join the group, follow the special instructions, and achieve the same uniform results.

A re-examination of the history of the Mughal state is also certainly worthwhile. To date it is commonly believed that the Mughal elites' serious engagement with South Asian religious traditions was initiated under Emperor Akbar. However, many scholars have long argued that this process began much earlier. As early as 1938, S. K. Bannerji, for instance, already stated that under Humayun a distinct Mughal culture was founded that was "cosmopolitan and assimilative" (Banerji 1938, 157). Eva Orthmann has made this argument much more forcefully; she further found that the origins of Akbar's religious practices actually originated in his father Humayun's time (Orthmann 2010, 202-220). The relationship with the Shattari brothers supports this.

Bibliography

- Alam, Muzaffar. 2004. *Languages of Political Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aquil, Riazuddin. 2008. "Hazrat-i-Dehli: The Making of the Chishti Sufi Centre and the Stronghold of 'Islam.'" *South Asia Research*, 28(1): 23-48.
- Banerji, S.K. 1938. "Humayun's religion." *Journal of Indian History*, 17: 151-164.
- Behl, Aditya. 2001. "Introduction." in *Madhumalati: An Indian History Romance*, trans. and ed. Aditya Behl. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Simon, Digby. 1964. "Dreams and Reminiscences of Dattu Sarvani a Sixteenth Century Indo-Afghan Soldier, *Indian Economic Social History Review*, 2: 52-80.
- . 1990. "The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India", *Iran*, 28: 71-81.
- Ernst, Carl W. 1996. "Sufism and yoga according to Muhammad Ghawth", *Sufi*, 29: 9-13.
- . 1999. "Persecution and circumspection in Shattari Sufism", in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Debate and Conflict*, ed. Fred de Jong and Bernt Radtke, Leiden: Brill.
- . 2003. "The Islamization of yoga in the Amrtakunda translations", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 13(2): 199-226.
- . 2008. "Javahar-e Khamsa" in Ehsan Yarshater (ed) *The Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. XIV, Fasc. 6: 608-609.
- Gaborieau, Marc. 1992. "L'ésotérisme musulman dans le sous-continent Indo-Pakistanaï", *Bulletin d'études orientales*, 1992: 191-209.
- Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliori, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, mss. India Office Library, 2124.
- Aftabachi, Jawhar. 2009. *Tazkerat al-Vāqē'āt* in W. M. Thackston, ed. and trans., *Three Memoirs of Humayun*, Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers.
- Muzammil Haq, Muhammad. 1982. 'Ghawth Gwaliori: A Sixteenth Century Shattari Saint of India, his Works and Disciples', *Dacca University Studies*, 36(A): 53-62.
- Khunji, Fazl Allah Ruzbihan. 2003. *Tarikh-e 'Alam'ara-e Amini*, ed. M.A. 'Ashiq Tehran: Intisharat-i Miras-i Maktub.
- Kugle, Scott A. 2003. "Heaven's witness: The uses and abuses of Muhammad Ghawth's mystical ascension", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 14(1): 1-36.
- Nizami, Khaliq Ahmed. 1950. "The Shattari saints and their attitude toward the state", *Medieval India Quarterly*, 1(2): 56-70.
- Orthmann, Eva. 2010. "Court Culture and Cosmology in the Mughal Empire : Humāyūn and the Foundation of the *dīn-i ilāhī*," in Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung,

eds., *Court Cultures in the Muslim World Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, New York: Routledge: 202-220.

Qadri, F.A. 1999. "Mughal relations with the Shattari Sufis: Abu'l-Fadl's treatment of Shaykh Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliori", *Islamic Culture*, 73(2): 63-77.

Contributors

(in alphabetical order)

Ali Anooshahr	91
<i>Associate Professor, Department of History & Program on Middle East/South Asia Studies, UC-Davis</i>	
Osmund Bopearachchi	15
<i>Emeritus, Ecole Normale Supérieure (Paris)</i>	
<i>University of California, Berkeley</i>	
Touraj Daryaee	61
<i>Professor, Department of History, UC-Irvine</i>	
Frantz Grenet	75
<i>Collège de France</i>	
Soodabeh Malekzadeh	61
<i>PhD Candidate in History, UC-Irvine</i>	
Afshin Marashi	125
<i>Associate Professor, Department of International and Area Studies & Farzaneh Family Chair of Iranian Studies, University of Oklahoma</i>	
Grant Parker	49
<i>Associate Professor, Department of Classics, Stanford University</i>	
Alka Patel	143
<i>Associate Professor, Department of Art History & Visual Studies, UC-Irvine</i>	
Sudipta Sen	103
<i>Professor, Department of History & Director, Program on Middle East/South Asia Studies, UC-Davis</i>	